

Leave No Trace In Prince William Forest Park



"All things are connected.
Whatever befalls the earth,
befalls the sons of the earth.
Man did not weave the web of life.
He is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web,
He does to himself."
Chief Seattle 1854

Leave No Trace in Prince William Forest Park

Prince William Forest Park provides a haven to wildlife and for people, a welcome break from our everyday lives. By recreating wisely we can minimize our impact on wildlife, habitat and fellow visitors while enjoying our experience in Prince William Forest Park. Leave No Trace (LNT) outdoor ethics is a set of seven principles which act as guidelines for practicing minimum impact hiking, camping, picnicking or even activities like walking your dog.

How to apply Leave No Trace outdoor ethics in Prince William Forest Park

Stick To The Trail

Traveling on designated trails leaves room for wildlife and their homes. Shortcutting or using nondesignated trails causes erosion and habitat loss. If you're hiking, be ready to get muddy and step right through puddles. Boots dry overnight, plants take years to recover. Wearing the appropriate clothing and footgear can prevent wet, sore feet.

Bicyclists must stick to the designated bicycle paths. Our hiking trails may seem like a fun place to try out a mountain bike, but they are not designed for bicycle use. Riding on hiking trails can cause excessive erosion, which washes sediment into Quantico Creek and on to the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. This affects far more than just Prince William Forest Park.

Pick Up After Your Pet

Dog poop stinks. It is not natural to Prince William Forest Park and others can step in it. Pack a pickup bag and always pick up your dog's poop-- wherever it's left.

Dog poop is a heath hazard. It also increases the nitrogen in the soil around the trail, giving the advantage to weeds over native plants. It may also be carried out to the Potomac River. Thanks for bagging your dog's poop, but the job's not done until you drop it in the trash can.

Manage Your Dog

Keeping your dog in control by always having it on a leash keeps people, wildlife and your dog safe. Others may not appreciate your dog's company. Carry a leash and use it whenever in Prince William Forest Park.

Trash Your Trash

Please take out all trash--yours and others. Even biodegradable materials such as orange peels, apple cores and food scraps take years to break down, and attract scavengers that harm other wildlife. The trash that is left in the park can make its way into Quantico Creek, the Potomac River, and then end up in the Chesapeake Bay. Eventually, the trash goes to the Atlantic Ocean, where it can harm fish, turtles, whales and other marine life. Remember, if you pack it into the park, be sure to pack it out when you leave.

Leave What You Find

Picking flowers, collecting rocks or taking arrowheads may not seem like a big deal, but with the very large number of visitors who visit Prince William Forest Park each year, it all adds up. It also means others will not be able to enjoy them. The less impact each person makes, the longer we will all enjoy our natural beauties. It is also against the law. A good motto to go by is: Take only pictures, and leave only footprints.

Note: On the opposite side of this brochure, you will find the seven principals to Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics.

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| 1. Plan Ahead and Prepare | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll be visiting.Prepare for extreme weather, hazards and emergencies.Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use, such as weekends and over holidays.Visit the park in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Repackage food to minimize waste. This also reduces the weight of your pack making hiking easier.When hiking cross-country, use a map and compass to eliminate the use of rock cairns, flagging or marking paint. |
| 2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses, mulch or snow.Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.Camp only in designated camping areas. Do not alter, modify or improve a campsite. This includes cutting branches, falling trees, enlarging camp site | <p>boundaries and digging trenches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Avoid areas where impacts are just beginning.Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites. |
| 3. Dispose of Waste Properly | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Because Prince William Forest Park is working toward becoming a trash-free park, we ask that you pack out what you packed in. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">To wash your dishes, use the utility sinks provided at comfort stations.To wash yourself, use the restrooms or shower facilities that are provided. Do not use the streams or spigots designed for drinking water. |
| 4. Leave What You Find | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Preserve the past: Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.Avoid introducing or transporting non-native plant and animal species. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Do not build structures, furniture or dig trenches. |
| 5. Minimize Campfire Impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Campfires can cause impacts which last for many years. Use a light weight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.Where fires are permitted, only use established fire rings and barbecues.Do not break off branches from trees or collect fire wood from the forest floor. You must supply your own fire wood from outside the park. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep fires small. Only use sticks that can be broken by hand. Do not make Bon fires-they are dangerous and wasteful. |
| 6. Respect Wildlife | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach wildlife.Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.Protect wildlife and your food by storing | <p>rations and trash securely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young or winter.Control pets at all times, or leave them at home. |
| 7. Be Considerate of other Visitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.Be courteous. Yield to other visitors on the trail. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Let nature's sound prevail. Avoid loud noises and voices. |